

THREE COUNT[®]

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Watts Up! WCW Hires Ex-UWF Boss as Vice President

By ALEX MARVEZ
Three Count Editor

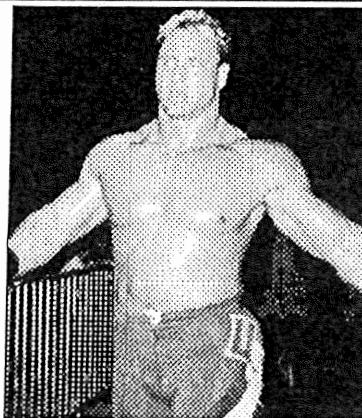
In a move totally unexpected by World Championship Wrestling employees and wrestling insiders, Bill Watts was appointed WCW's vice president in charge of wrestling operations May 12, giving him virtually limitless power over the promotion.

Watts is the former owner of the Universal Wrestling Federation, an Oklahoma-based group that blossomed into the country's No. 3 promotion during the mid-1980s. The UWF was known for its hard-core style of wrestling and brawling, with Watts employing such talent as Steve Williams, Terry Gordy, Rick Steiner, Sting, Terry Taylor and Eddie Gilbert in top-of-the-card roles. After several years as an extremely successful regional promotion, Watts syndicated the UWF's telecasts across the country in 1985, eventually reaching approximately 190 markets. But the UWF did not promote shows across the country, focusing instead on the oil belt region of the United States (Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, etc). A combination of an oil recession that affected house show attendance, talent raids by the World Wrestling Federation and a mediocre turn-out on a nationwide tour in March 1987 forced Watts to sell the UWF to Jim Crockett Promotions in April 1987. Watts involvement in the wrestling business ended at that point, although he was interviewed twice by WCW in 1988 for a spot in the company.

There were several reasons for the move, according to those close to the situation. One is a philosophical difference between WCW executives Bill Shaw and Jack Petrick. A high-ranking WCW official said Shaw, a Ted Turner executive who was given the wrestling company when Petrick was reassigned to handle the launching of Turner's Hannah Barabara cartoon network, believes an officer with a wrestling background should be controlling the company. Petrick believed a corporate head with an entertainment or television background, like former WCW executive vice president Jim Herd and current WCW vice president Kip Frey, should hold the position.

Another source said the decision was made because of unhappiness with the

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Todd Champion wrestled in one of two unannounced pay-per-view matches May 17 at Wrestle War (Credit: Alex Marvez).

Sting's Team Wins on PPV

By ALEX MARVEZ
Three Count Editor

JACKSONVILLE -- Sting's Squadron (Ricky Steamboat-Dustin Rhodes-Sting-Barry Windham-Nikita Koloff) defeated The

Dangerous Alliance (Steve Austin-Bobby Eaton-Larry Zbyszko-Rick Rude-Arn Anderson) in the main event of World Championship Wrestling's Wrestle War '92 pay-per-view May 17 before an estimated crowd of 6,000 at the Jacksonville Coliseum.

The pay-per-view show was WCW's first under the advisement of Bill Watts, who was appointed the group's vice president of wrestling operations May 12. His impact

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Briefly

- World Championship Wrestling has been forced to change its scheduled live telecast of the Clash of Champions from June 16 to a taped telecast June 22 because of a front-office error. The telecast, which will feature the opening round of the National Wrestling Alliance tag-team title tournament, cannot be shown on TBS on June 16 because of another programming commitment. Because the travel arrangements for the foreign entries in the tag-team tournament have already been so-

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WCW Hires Watts

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way Frey was running the company. Frey, a 33-year-old attorney whose background was in entertainment law when he took over Herd's position in January, had no experience in the wrestling business. The source said some executives were unhappy with the progress WCW was making under the match-making regime of **Dusty Rhodes**, and they blamed Frey for keeping Rhodes in power.

The final straw may have come after the May 10 show at Atlanta's Omni, in which WCW only drew 1,200 fans (the lowest paid attendance total in the history of wrestling at the Omni). Not only is it important for WCW to draw fans to its Omni shows because the company's headquarters are in Atlanta, but because Shaw's assistant, **Bob Dhue**, used to be the Omni's building manager before his involvement in the wrestling company last March. Word had gotten out among WCW wrestlers last Monday that Watts was coming in, but no one was sure what capacity he would have or what his position would be.

Watts was introduced to the hierarchy of WCW the morning of May 12. A WCW source said Shaw walked into the meeting room, followed by Watts and Dhue, slammed a memo down on the table and said, "There are going to be some changes around here." At that point, he said Watts would have complete control of the wrestling product. Rhodes thus became Watts assistant. Frey remains a WCW vice president, but is not involved with the in-ring product. He is now in charge of handling merchandising, television syndication, the marketing of new wrestlers and contract negotiations.

Watts first action as boss was to cancel WCW's scheduled August pay-per-view show featuring the National Wrestling Alliance title tournament in Japan. He also canceled the September 12 Campus Crush pay-per-view show. Watts also reportedly wanted to cancel the June 20 Beach Blast pay-per-view show, but was told by Turner Home Entertainment that it was too late. Watts also kicked **Terry Allen**, Rhodes' assistant, out of his office to assume the space. Allen remains in the company, but does not have a regular place to sit.

The wrestlers were introduced to Watts May 14 prior to a house show in Savannah, Ga. Watts announced some new guidelines:

- Babyface wrestlers were no longer allowed to travel together on the road (for fear of exposing the wrestling business). They were also not allowed to eat in the same restaurants together.
- There will be no more low blows or referee bumps. There will also apparently be a lot more clean finishes

in WCW. Every match on the Savannah show (which drew a miserable \$12,000 gate)

- WCW will adapt a six-to-seven night a week touring schedule beginning in August. WCW will run two shows a night, dividing its rosters into split squads.

Watts has also hired former WCW match-maker **Ole Anderson** as his assistant. What Anderson will do in WCW is unknown, but he will serve as a special guest referee for important main event matches.

With house show business declining for both WCW and the WWF, it seems a strange move to emphasize house shows in light of pay-per-view revenue (WCW lost an estimated \$1.5 million in pay-per-view revenue with the cancellation of its August and September pay-per-view shows). WCW grossed approximately only \$30,000 the weekend of May 8-10, the lowest amount for a three-day weekend swing since Turner bought the company in 1988.

Sheet Spotlight

Here's a look at the top stories of some of the other wrestling newsletters, with subscription information:

• **Dave Meltzer's Wrestling Observer Newsletter** (May 18): Obituary on death of NWA promoter **Fred Ward**; Summary of steroid articles in *Muscular Development* and *Muscle Mag International*; Japanese television summary and loads of regional reports. Weekly; \$1.50 an issue. P.O. Box 1228, Campbell CA 95009-1228.

• **Wade Keller's Pro Wrestling Torch** (May 14): Preview of *Wrestle War* written by Keller; **Mark Madden** column on **Bill Fralic**; More nice comments about **Dusty Rhodes** from **Jim Ross**. (May 16): Special edition covering Watts hiring. Features excerpts of 1991 Watts interview, three columns (Keller, **Bruce Mitchell** and **Mark Madden**) and mini-biographies of Japan's women wrestlers by **Chris Zavisa**. Probably the best *Torch* ever written. Weekly; \$1.25 an issue (Free sample available). P.O. Box 201844, Minneapolis MN 55420.

• **Steve Sims's Lucha Libre Weekly** (May 12): A well-written explanation of the rules and history of *lucha libre*; More details on the Antonio Pena-Paco Alonso split; News from the UWA and CMLL. Weekly; \$1 an issue. 1427 West Dickens Ave., Chicago, IL 60614-3003.

THREE COUNT®

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John Muse..... Japan

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Briefly

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lified, the show must take place in Charleston, S.C. on June 16. This is the first WCW pay-per-view show ever telecast on a tape-delay basis since the quarterly format began in 1988. **Jim Barnett**, who is in charge of arena bookings at WCW, has taken most of the blame for the situation. A source close to WCW said Barnett has blamed former WCW director of media relations **Wayne Coulter** for the snafu. What makes the situation especially painful for WCW is that the Clash airs two days after the June 20 Beach Brawl pay-per-view show, thus a free wrestling special may hurt the PPV's buy rate.

- The Great American Bash pay-per-view show slated for July 12 at the Philadelphia Civic Center has officially been moved to Albany, Ga., because of the threat of an impending strike by the Pennsylvania Electrician's Union. Tickets for the Bash go on sale June 13.

- Word has it **Roberto Duran** wants to learn the shoot-fighting style to return to Japan for the Pro Wrestling Fujiwara group. Duran, a former middleweight champion who was grossly overweight in losing an April 20 fight to **Masaharu Funaki** via a third-round TKO in Japan, is reportedly scheduled to begin training with PWF champion **Bart Vail** in Miami.

- **Mike McGuirk** has been fired as a WWF ring announcer, and a replacement is being sought. The wrestling grapevine says **The Ultimate Warrior** is pushing hard for his chauffeur (yes, the Warrior is being driven around) to get the position.

- The WWF hit a new low last weekend with the airing of The Warrior spewing green vomit all over the "medical staff" after doing a stretcher job for **Papa Shongo**. No, J.J. Dillon is the WWF's match-maker, not **Eric Embry**.

- Coming off what is believed to be the worst weekend of house shows in WWF history, the WWF canceled its scheduled shows for the weekends of Memorial Day and July 4th. The WWF did an estimated gross of \$205,000 for the weekend of May 8-10.

- The Japanese Frontier Martial Arts Wrestling group's American debut was a smashing success at the Cal-State L.A. University gym May 16, drawing between 3,500-6,100 fans. The main attraction was Mexican wrestler **El Hijo del Santo**, who is a legend among L.A.'s Mexican community. Santo teamed with FMW owner **Atsushi Onita** and **Tarzan Goto** to defeat **Negro Casas-Horace Boulder** (**Hulk Hogan's** nephew)-**Tim Patterson** in two-of-three falls. Goto pinned Patterson after a front-face DDT in the first fall, and Casas won the second after pinning Casas. Onita won the match for his tam by pinning Boulder. **Wrestle Talk** radio show host **Ric Carter** said this was a five-star match, with brawling throughout the arena. In the other matches on the show (none of them ranking less than 2.25 stars) were **Tinneblas Jr.** and **Sr.-Ricky Fuji** d. **Sambo Asako-Gigante Warrior** (**Butch Masters**)-**Mando Guerrero** in the second best match of the night, **Negumi Kido-Miwa Saito-Uri Moritatsu** d. **Combat Toyota-Eriko Tsuchiga-Yoshika Maedomari** in a woman's match, **Super Muneco-Ultra Tiger-Ultraman 2000** d. **Bull Rider-Genghis Khan-The Shooter**, **The Mercenaries** (**Billy Anderson-Louie Spiccoli-Jesse Hernandez**) defeated **Eiji Azaki-Ultra Toro-Gannosu Uke**, **Ichihara** d. **American Eagle** (**Bob Bradley**) and **Piloto Suicida-Superstar Jr.** d. **Chamaco Rebelde-Estampa Brava**. Another show is scheduled for Cal-State L.A. for May 31, although none of the Japanese stars will appear. Santo vs. Casas is the main event, which should guarantee a sell-out.



Marilyn Matos (left, wife of Three Count lucha libre columnist Carlos Rey), Dr. Mike Lano and Roberto Duran together at the PWF's March 20 show in Miami (Photo: Carlos Rey).

The Watts philosophy reportedly calls for only four PPV shows a year, with three of the four having gimmick matches (like War Games or Battle Bowl) as the main event. The other card will feature a heavyweight title match. Watts reportedly believes that the heavyweight title should only be featured on house shows to draw fans to the arenas.

Regarding talent, no one is quite sure what new faces are coming to WCW and which members of the current roster will be upgraded or downgraded. One certainty is a mega-push for the Steiners and the Williams-Gordy tag-teams. Two names that were bandied about as possibly coming in -- **Jim Cornette** and **Ric Flair** -- are not. But **Gilbert** is a probable signee, most likely in a front-office position.

Whether the policies Frey enacted during his tenure as overseer of WCW -- steroid testing, community service -- remain is presently unknown. Also in jeopardy are the light-heavyweight division and a working relationship with New Japan Pro Wrestling. Relations with the wrestling media are also expected to be severed (Watts held a meeting with WCW wrestlers May 17 after reading The Miami Herald's column about the details of the May 14 meeting). Watts is on vacation with his new wife from May 18-31, so other changes may be harder to gauge until June.

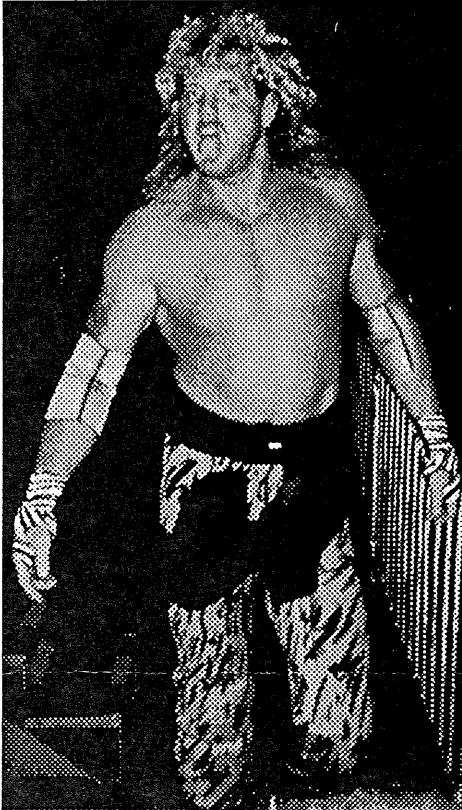
Watts' Impact Felt at Wrestle War

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was already felt through the use of conclusive finishes and blood. The show, which drew an approximate gate of \$72,000, featured one match not taped for television. **Diamond Dallas Page** and **Thomas Rich** defeated **Bob Cook** and **Firebreaker Chip** when Page pinned Cook with a reverse DDT. Results and analysis of the nine matches shown on pay-per-view:

1)

The Freebirds (**Jimmy Garvin** and **Michael Hayes**) defeated **Terry Taylor**-**Greg Valentine** to



Diamond Dallas Page

win the U.S. tag-team titles. You know the Jacksonville crowd would go nuts for the 'Birds after they wildly cheered Chip in the show's opener. This was the best match the Freebirds have been involved with in quite some time. The heels took the advantage at about the five-minute mark when Taylor hit Hayes with a five-arm on a DDT attempt on Valentine. The rest of the bout featured good action, capped when Garvin DDT'd Taylor for the victory. Following the second match, The Freebirds introduced their third member -- Precious. **Grade: B.**

2) **Johnny B. Badd** pinned **Tracey Smothers** with a knockout punch. A mediocre match. The highlight was Smothers kicking out of Badd's top-rope sunset flip, which I guess relegates Badd's finishing maneuver into a transition hold. **Grade: D.**

3) **Scotty Flamingo** defeated **Marcus Alexander Bagwell** by reversing a rolling reverse and holding onto Bagwell's trunks for leverage. Bagwell hooked Flamingo in the fisherman suplex, but Flamingo got his foot on the

ropes. These two have worked together for a while, so it was a pretty good (though unspectacular) match. **Grade: B-.**

4) **Ron Simmons** pinned **Mr. Hughes** after a football tackle (I guess Watts wants all ex-football players to resemble the role). This was scheduled as a tag-team match between Simmons and **Junkyard Dog** vs. Hughes and **Cactus Jack**. But while the babyfaces were on the way to the ring, Hughes and Jack attacked. From where I was sitting, it appeared Dog took his first bump in seven years off the ramp. But on television, it was evident Dog just flopped off. Jack took some amazing bumps, including his elbow smash off the ramp onto Dog on the floor and a backdrop on the ramp. Jack must be thrilled **Ole Anderson** is returning to WCW after Ole fired him in May 1990 for taking bumps "that exposed the business." After Simmons helped JYD to the locker room, he came back and the match turned into a singles contest. Hughes has potential but needs work. The finish looked awful. For someone who is going to be in a world title match on WCW's next pay-per-view show, Jack gained no momentum from this show. **Grade: C-.**

5) **The Super Invader** (Ray "Hercules" Hernandez) defeated **Todd Champion** in the most excruciating pay-per-view bout since the **Bushwhackers-Beverly Brothers** debacle on the Royal Rumble show. This match was inexplicably added to the pay-per-view show at the last minute. Todd did take one nice bump on the floor, but it was only because he lost his balance. As printed elsewhere, **Harley Race** does look like **Redd Foxx** with his new blond hair. **Grade: F.**

6) **Big Josh** defeated **Richard Morton** in another late addition. Josh substituted for **The Diamond Studd** (Scott Hall), because Studd is joining the WWF as a character similar to **Fonzie** (from *Happy Days*, not WCW referee **Bill "Screwjob" Alfonso**). Hall told WCW assistant booker **Dusty Rhodes** of his decision 30 minutes before the pay-per-view show. The loss of Studd, which wouldn't have been a big deal a few months ago, is actually a fairly big one, as Studd was being groomed to join **The Dangerous Alliance** and feud with **Dustin Rhodes** (the angles have already been taped for television). The match was average, ending with Josh squashing Morton with his butt-drop finisher. **Grade: D.**

7) **Brian Pillman** defeated **Tom Zenk** to retain the WCW light-heavyweight title. Fantastic match, with Zenk looking the best he has since entering WCW in 1989 (yes, it's been that long). Pillman showed no adverse affects of the back injury that kept him sidelined for two months. Finish came when Zenk missed a dropkick off the top rope, Pillman grabbed his legs and flipped over

for the pin. **Grade: A.**

8) **Rick-Scott Steiner** defeated **Takayuki Iizuka-Tatsumi Fujinami** in a match that represented many of the things wrong in wrestling today. During the 18-minute-or-so match, the Steiner brothers were in control more than 90 percent of the time. When they weren't, the Steiners didn't sell for long or allow any sort of sympathy heat build. They may have fantastic talent, but the Steiners really need an attitude adjustment, and I don't think in the Watts regime they will get one. The Steiners used almost their entire repertoire during the match. Iizuka sustained a crushed jaw and bloody nose on a missed spot five minutes into the match, but he continued to wrestle. Fujinami had Rick Steiner on his shoulders. Iizuka jumped to appear like he was going to deliver a clothesline, but Steiner tried to catch him for a powerslam. Iizuka landed on his head, with Rick on top. The finish came when Rick gave Iizuka a belly-to-belly suplex off the top rope. **Grade: A-** for the hot moves; **F** for the way the match was booked and the Steiners' actions.

9) **Sting's Squadron** defeated **The Dangerous Alliance** in the War Games when Sting made Eaton submit to an armbar. This was one of the best matches I have ever seen live, but watching it on television did not do it justice. There was too much going on for a television camera to follow. What fans didn't see were the subtleties of the Alliance. Zbyszko kept trying to move past one of his teammates to enter the match, but **Paul E. Dangerously** continued to try and stop him. There was also never a close-up of a fantastic chart used by the heels to plot a "game plan" for the match. The chart had little stick figures drawn across the ring, with one of the babyface stick figures having the word "Extinct" underneath it. Fortunately, the cameras did not pick up two "**Rodney King**" comments Dangerously made to an obnoxious Afro-American fan at ringside. One really stupid comment came from announcer **Jim Ross**, who compared Dangerously to **Jim Jones** at Guyana. Also, any debate about whether Koloff and Sting were friends was eradicated over the past few weeks on television. The original plan was to have Koloff portrayed as a "tweener" who could possibly help the babyfaces or heels. But Sting's injury in an April 12 match against **Big Van Vader** forced WCW to substitute Koloff for the Stinger at house shows. This being the case, why continue to try and push the old angle?

This match featured the return of the blade for WCW, as four wrestlers (Austin, Windham, Anderson, Rhodes) were bleeding. Of course, with the AIDS epidemic and the saintly out-of-the-ring life most WCW wrestlers lead, **Ted Turner** shouldn't be worried about a fan or wrestler contracting the terminal disease through the use of intentional bleeding. The order of entry was Austin, Windham, Rude, Steamboat, Anderson, Dustin, Zbyszko, Sting, Eaton, Koloff. I know, Sting should have

begun the match to try and rebuild some of the credibility he has lost as champion the past few months. And anyone who claims The Stinger may have been too injured to last 30 minutes in the match should rewind the tape and watch the number of highspots he did, showing no sign of rib trouble.

Well, enough criticism. This match was fantastic. Among the highlights were Austin getting backdropped into the cage, **Madusa** climbing on top of the cage to toss a phone into Anderson (It was awe-striking in person, but the camera angles on television didn't emphasize just how high Madusa was off the ground), Anderson getting his head stuck between the



Steve Austin

rings, Koloff pushing Sting out of the way so he could get double clotheslined (thus making amends for clotheslining the Stinger instead of **Lex Luger** at last year's SuperBrawl pay-per-view show, if any casual fan remembers) and Steamboat destroying Rude and Austin in a great sequence. The heels tried loosening one of the ring ropes toward the end of the match, finally succeeding for the finishing sequence. Eaton grabbed Sting, and Zbyszko attempted hitting him with the steel bar connecting the turnbuckle with the ring post. Sting moved and Eaton got hit in the shoulder. Sting then forced the submission. Eaton wasn't originally supposed to working this match, having sustained

an arm injury earlier in the week. I guess Eaton will miss a few weeks to sell the injury, although he was moving awfully fine at the bar after the match. The heels almost turned on Zbyszko after the match, but everyone kissed and made up -- for now. **Grade: A+.**

Notes: The big question -- Where does WCW go from here? Over the past month, the D.A. has lost two of its three titles, and now the War Games. Instead of introducing a new issue on television, the feud will continue to get pushed for the next few weeks. Now, everyone has to wait and see what Watts' first moves will be ... The show rates a seven on a 10-point scale. Some of the early and middle parts of the show dragged, and the Champion-Invader match cost the show one point just for being booked. Adding two matches that meant nothing to the show didn't help matters, either ... Not only did the show gross \$72,600 in Jacksonville, but the early estimated pay-per-view buy rate in the area was even better than **Wrestlemania VIII** by a 2,000-1,800 margin ... WCW returns to Jacksonville August 15 ... A special hello to everyone I met in Jacksonville, including Ron, Chris, Sissy, Scott, Mike, Hitch & Mitch, Harry, Lenis, John and anyone else who I accidentally omitted.

Pena Opens AAA Group in Mexico

By STEVE SIMS
Special to Three Count

Former CMLL vice president Antonio Pena announced the creation of the new "Asistencia Asesoria Administracion" (AAA) promotion May 7 at a news conference in Mexico City.

Pena had submitted his resignation from the CMLL to group president Paco Alonso April 29, the climax of an on-going behind-the-scenes power struggle between the two. At the news conference, Pena announced dates and locations for his first cards and of the talent which would be leaving the CMLL and rival UWA to join the AAA.

Pena has signed 30 wrestlers and the approximately 24 midget wrestlers he brought into the CMLL group. The top names: Fuerza Guerrera, Octagon, El Hijo del Santo, Perro Aguayo, Angel Azteca, The Dynamite Brothers (Cien Caras, Mascara Año 2000-Universo 2000), Konan, Blue Panther and Mascara Sagrada. The "jumping" of many of these wrestlers will cause some interesting scenes to be played out in the next few months. The reason is that many of these wrestlers who are jumping hold championships in other organizations, such as Octagon as the Mexican National Middleweight Champion and Panther as the CMLL World Middleweight Champion. What will become of these titles? Well, traditionally the "Mexican National" championships have been beyond the control of any organization. The CMLL holds sway over most of these titles now, though the UWA has some and the AWWA had the Trios title in 1990 and 1991. It is possible, though I could not give you any sort of odds on it, that these titles will stay with their holder and go to the AAA.

As far as the UWA title and the CMLL World Titles, that is a horse of a different color. So far as I can tell, there are only two options available to the older organizations. One is to strip the holder (or have the holder "voluntarily" relinquish the title). This is not a preferable option, because it robs the promotion of the gates of a profitable title change match. The other option is to quickly run a series or even one match in which a new champion is crowned. This is not a preferable option, because it tends to "expose the business." I don't know what direction things are going in right now. One note: Santo has never lost a title he has won. He has always vacated the belt to move to a higher weight class or switch promotions, so I would not expect him to lose his belt.

Pena announced that because of various contractual agreements signed by the UWA and CMLL with various arenas around Mexico, the arenas the AAA would be running for May would be smaller arenas with

a capacity of around 4,000 each. None of these arenas is located within 50 miles of Mexico City. Oddly enough, the contracts between the UWA and CMLL and the larger Mexico City-area arenas was just signed within the last two months in the formal conclusion to the wrestler union's strike of late 1991.

Pena announced the first show would be held May 15 at a small arena in Veracruz, Mexico. The next card is one week later Queretaro, followed by another May 29 card in Veracruz. There will also be one card each Friday in June. No cards have been announced for any other days of the week. Most wrestlers work seven days a week, some twice a day. This will be quite a switch for those wrestlers who have joined the AAA to work just once a week.

Now, to answer some basic questions that were asked when the split occurred:

- **Who would get the television?** As it turns out, Alonso did. He informed Televisa there was a valid contract between the CMLL and Televisa, and the group expected the contract would be upheld. Expect the television product to remain the same in regards to quality.

- **What will Alonso's next move be?** He has to decide what will be done with the championships. Also, since Televisa made a ton of money with Octagon's and Atlantis' movie *La Revancha* and the two are now in separate organizations, Alonso needs to calm ruffled feathers at Televisa.

- **How will this affect the UWA?** Would you believe an agreement between Pena and the UWA? One of the strange mysteries lately has been the sudden appearance on the last two UWA television shows of a ring mat with the "Corona" emblem. Very few people know that Corona only became a name sponsor (on the mat) of the EMLL right after Pena joined the company. Plus, the UWA has a new announcer. Maybe it means or nothing; maybe it means something. Pena is a wrestling television producer and Lord knows the UWA television could use some help. Actually, the UWA is only losing the services of El Fantasma (a regular), Santo (semi-regular) and Aguayo (occasional performer). I believe the UWA would gain more by taking Pena in than they would in competing with him, but it's still likely the UWA will stand for right now.

- **What does the immediate future hold?** For the fan, business as usual while 32 wrestlers and midgets will be missing. For the CMLL and UWA, there should be no impact so long as they don't let it and pay attention to business as usual. For the 32 wrestlers who jumped, it will be tough. Should Pena fold, the EMLL took back wrestlers who jumped to the UWA in 1974. But this is 1992.

Huracarana Blows Through CMLL

The CMLL's Galavision show that aired May 17 turned out to be a lot better than it seemed it would. But I am expecting trouble, because the shows are of a lower quality than what we have come to expect from this group. The CMLL is still running shows at the Arena Coliseo, not at the larger and television-friendly Arena Mexico, so these shows are supposed to be of a lower grade. But I do have the feeling that soon we will begin feeling the effects of the split between Paco Alonso and Antonio Pena.

Carlos Rey



1) The techinco team of **America-El Apache-Solar II** defeated **Supremo I and II-Guerrero de la Muerte** (rudos) in two-of-three falls. Again, we had new faces on the Galavision show with Apache and Muerte. Also, Los Supremos haven't been seen on this show for a long time. Solar II (referred to as Solar last week; He is carrying on the name of his father) debuted last week. The technicians won the first fall as Apache pinned Supremo I, Solar made Supremo II submit and America pinned Muerte in the middle of the ring. The rudos slowly but surely gained control of the second fall, ending with Supremo II suplexing Solar for the pin, Muerte pinning America after a butt-splash off the top rope and Apache submitting to Supremo I. The third fall saw both teams try real hard, with plenty of fantastic moves. If you can see the tape, check out America's lance (jump outside the ring) onto Muerte. Supremo I (the team captain) was pinned with a double huracarana (a variation of a roll-up, only the opponents arms and head are also pretty well tied-up) by Solar and Apache, thus ending the match.

2) Another techinco victory, as **Lady Apache-Cynthia Moreno-Xochitl Hamada** defeated **La Tigres-La Diabolica-Marta Villalobos** in two-of-three falls. This match looked like the beauties vs. the beasts, but don't let the good looks of the technica team fool you. It is full of talent. Hamada put up a good battle against the much-larger Villalobos in the first fall, and Moreo ended up pinning Villalobos. Apache pinned Diabolica and Hamada pinned Tigres. The second fall saw Villalobos splashing all three girls off the top rope for the pin. The rudos also appeared headed for a victory in the third fall until Apache applied a terrific bridge to Villalobos. The other technicas held Villalobos' legs and the pin was counted to end the match.

3) Technico victory No. 3 as **Ringo Mendoza-El Faraon-Ciclón Ramirez** defeated **Gran Markus Jr.-Ángel Blanco Jr.-El Feliso**. Faraon and Mendoza are two familiar

faces who haven't been seen on Galavision in quite a while. Faraon has a great following, as many years ago (in 1983 or '84) he had one of the bloodiest feuds in Mexico against **Sangre Chicana**, which ended with Faraon winning a hair vs. hair match. Chicana disappeared for a few years after this bout. In the first fall, Medoza pinned Blanco with the huracarana, Ramirez pinned Markus after a top-rope dropkick and Faraon made Feliso submit to a crucifix. The rudos won the second fall, with Feliso making Ramirez submit with a variation of the half-Boston crab, and Mendoza (the team captain) being pinned by both Markus and Blanco. The third fall seemed to set up a mask vs. mask match between Feliso and Ramirez at some point during the future. After some hot action, Ramirez gained a pinfall on Feliso with the huracarana (It must have been huracarana night on Galavision).

4) This was the main event, and also the best match on the card. **Apolo Dantes-Ultimo Dragon-Atlantis** defeated **Blue Panther-La Fiera-Kendo Nagasaki** in two-of-three falls for a clean sweep of victories by the technicians. You can't tell the Dragon is Japanese by the costume he wears. This was Panther's final CMLL appearance, as he has signed with **Antonio Pena's** new AAA group. The poor lighting was really evident during this match, which makes me glad the CMLL returns to Arena Mexico for their next telecast card. The first fall ended when Atlantis made Fiera submit to a lucha-style backbreaker (It was like the human torture rack, but the opponent is turned the other way and his hands are twisted together), Dragon pinned Nagasaki (who took more bumps in one sequence than in his whole U.S. career) and Panther could not answer the bell. The rudos dominated the second fall, with Nagasaki pinning Atlantis, Panther power bombing Dragon and Dantes submitting after a Fiera shoulder breaker into an armbar submission. This match became pure brawling in the third fall. Dragon (**Yoshihiro Asai**) must be injured pretty badly, because he hasn't been anywhere near full-speed for more than a month. Atlantis had Panther in a backbreaker, and let him go thinking he had submitted. The referees had their backs turned, but turned around just in time to see Panther low-blow Atlantis, signalling the disqualification. After the match, Atlantis said new referee **El Tigre Hispania** (the replacement for **Gato Montini**, who was suspended for until two weeks from now) was unfair and he wanted to challenge Panther to a mask vs. mask match -- something that obviously won't happen with Panther gone. The rudos renewed their attack and continued destroying the technicians until the show went off the air.

Anyone interested in obtaining Galavision tapes can write to Carlos at 996 West 45th Place, Hialeah, FL 33012 for more information.

House of Watts Needs PPV Base

I was planning to run one of three columns this time out, either on an event 99 and 44/100 percent sure to occur as I write this (cryptic enough for you?), the death of Lyle Alzado or one with my views on the other wrestling media's handling of this sport's chills and ills over the past five months. Naturally, the way 1992 has been going, all three pieces were rendered useless.

Paul Hanlin Jr.



Sorry, Murphy Brown, but I'll have to miss your child-birth tonight. The second biggest wrestling story of the year so far (nothing tops the WWF scandals) has exploded. Tonight is a prime-time of why they made VCR's.

Bill Watts is back. Jubilation throughout the wrestling underground. The knight in shining armor has arrived to save us from Vince-a-mania.

Not so fast ...

Grappling sheet-dom's favorite promoter-booker is now at the helm of World Championship Wrestling for all intents and purposes. One would have loved to have been a fly on the wall to see how one Virgil Riley Runnels handled having his free reign swiped from him in one fell swoop. Wither Big Dust in all of this?

A lot has changed in this business since William Watts left it five years ago. Arena business in this country is hemorrhaging on all fronts, with all groups. Pay-per-view is the icing *and* the cake for the wrestling profession today. Watts knows none of this yet, but he will soon enough.

As with any leadership change in WCW, things will have to take time. Any decisions by Watts to cancel pay-per-view shows or concentrate on building the house show business would seem sheer folly given the economy and the times of the present day. What triggered the shocking decision to bring in Watts? As proposed by many, the fact that empty seats in Atlanta's Omni outnumbered

the warm bodies who inhabit them by a much larger margin than usual for its last show. Only 1,000 fans attended the May 10 Omni card. Not even in the darkest days of Ole Anderson's Championship Wrestling from Georgia were the crowds this dismal.

So why, per my editor, is Ole back in WCW? One look-see at his prior tours of duty were disastrous, and that's being nice about it.

Let's not jump on the bandwagon lest it collapse before it even gets any momentum is all I'm saying.

WCW has had its heart pulled out via its throat, shot itself in the foot and every other body part a baker's dozen times over, has allowed big-headed stars to remain employed when they don't sacrifice their own heat for the good of the company and has shafted its franchise wrestler (who now is trapped in a promotion drenched in scandal every other week). And that's just for starters. It's going to take time and patience, more so than ever. We all like to think the most important thing in wrestling is the house show.

Reality check ...

The now and future of wrestling is pay-per-view. Like it or not, and I'm of the "not" opinion, one must change with the times or be left behind. I guess Bruce Mitchell put it best in a special issue of the *Pro Wrestling Torch*: "If Bill Watts fails ... WCW on TBS is, for all practical purposes, over. This, folks, is it."

So, Bill, even though you may not even get to read this, I wish you the best. You've been given the remnants of a promotion whose roots go back a century. Some name-dropping by yours truly: Gotch and Hackenschmidt, O'Connor and Thesz, Kiniski and Race, the Briscos, the Funks and Nature Boys -- Ric and Buddy, that is. A Native American proverb will do quite nicely here: We don't inherit the land from our forefathers -- we borrow it from our children.

You're the borrower now, Mr. Watts. Now do all clear-thinking wrestling fans a favor ... and kick Vince's ass, will ya? You're our last hope.

Letters

WCW House Show Title Switches a Bad Idea

Dear Alex,

Why wasn't the Steiners victory over Arn Anderson-Bobby Eaton for the WCW tag-team titles shown on TV? With a title change between perhaps two of the best four teams in the world, one would think it would be good for ratings. Was this another one of those non-televised losses clauses (where fans at the live arena think the title has switched hands but the change is not acknowledged by the promotion), or are Anderson and Eaton leaving to the WWF or was it another attempt by WCW to copy the WWF (their not televising of the Legion of Doom's loss to Money, Inc.) even when its a bad idea?

With Sid Justice's suspension and The Warlord's hiatus, it appears the WWF may be serious about its policy. Is that perhaps a reason why we haven't seen The Barbarian recently, or has he been wrestling in Japan? Justice was taken off the introduction of WWF Superstars this past week. Has he left the WWF or was his removal just for his suspension?

What happened to Eddie Gilbert's negotiations with the WWF? What happened between he and Madusa? Where are The SST and The Maulers? Papa Shongo's gimmick keeps getting better and better.

-- Steve Smith
North Miami Beach, FL

AM: WCW's last two tag-team title switches were not taped for television because they believe that title changes at a house show will lure fans to the arena if they think something "special" is going to happen. It is not a bad concept, but promoting the title changes as such must be done well. In the May 14 issue of *Pro Wrestling Torch*, editor Wade Keller made an excellent point when reporting how unimportant it makes the title change look when Tony Schiavone casually mentioned it 20 minutes into a *World Wide Wrestling* telecast. Just a note about the WWF's two house show title changes last winter. They were not planned, but were more precautionary measures to protect against Bret Hart (who lost the Intercontinental title to The Mountie) and the L.O.D. from leaving the promotion while still holding championships.

The WWF appears to be cracking down on steroid abuse amongst its mid-card wrestlers, but what type of message does it send to the boys when the L.O.D. and Lex Luger are being groomed for headline positions? The Barbarian, I believe, still works for the WWF on a sporadic basis, but is being allowed to work independent shows. I expect Justice back around the time of Summer Slam.

I don't believe Gilbert ever met with the WWF, and he is working for the Memphis-based USWA. I will have more on the status of Madusa and Gilbert next week. With the L.O.D.'s return, I don't believe either The Maulers or The SST will be coming in soon.

Dear Alex,

Your newsletter is provocative and stimulating, with a tremendous emphasis on major news happenings in professional wrestling. A number of newsletters which I have discontinued subscribing to are irresponsibly biased and non-objective in their attitudes toward the federations, the people who run them and the premiere superstars in wrestling that the public wants to see. Keep up the good work. I am against any publication which is either biased toward WCW or out to lynch Hulk Hogan. Your newsletter was a very pleasant discovery.

-- Gary Skyberg, North Hollywood CA

Terminology

As per several requests, *Three Count* is presenting a glossary on inside terms used in the wrestling business, with the final part presented here. A substantial number of TC subscribers are newcomers to the inner-workings of the business, and hopefully the glossary will help decipher some of the things I write. A special thanks to Mike Rosenthal for the list.

- **Selling:** When an opponent uses facial and body expressions to make his opponents moves look good.

- **Shoot:** A shoot is when a wrestling match turns into a legitimate fight (a very rare occurrence). There are also "shoot interviews," where a performer will either deviate from the script or offer "inside" comments.

- **Shooter:** A wrestler who is trained in the art of shooting, which is similar to amateur wrestling but more vicious. Shooters know holds that can either knock someone unconscious or break a joint or bone by locking it and twisting it in the wrong direction.

- **Spot:** Refers to when a wrestler does a sequenced move. Example: Ric Flair's flip into the turnbuckle.

- **Squash:** A preliminary match, where one wrestler completely dominates the other. This is the format for most television matches.

- **Stiff:** 1. To apply a hold too powerfully; 2. A big muscle-bound clutz attempting to wrestle. Fill in your own example.

- **Worker:** Refers to all wrestlers.

Spotlight on: Vince Russo

*In Issues 30-31 of **Three Count**, the plight of Pro Wrestling Spotlight founder John Arezzi was featured in a lengthy interview. Arezzi, who produces a newsletter and hosts a radio show under the PWS logo, explained the details of his split with Vince Russo, a New York City video store owner who sponsored Arezzi's show. The effect of the split still lingers today. He is also producing the PWS newsletter without Russo, and has agreed to give up to a three-month subscription for free for anyone who subscribed to the PWS produced by Arezzi and Russo.*

Russo ceased publication of his newsletter, Vicious Vince's World of Wrestling, last week. Russo said the corporation went bankrupt, and refunds will not be given to those who subscribed to the Russo-Arezzi newsletter. Russo said he plans to begin publication of a newsletter in three-to-six months once his radio show is established.

The format of this Spotlight interview is different than the norm. I read the transcript to Arezzi's interview to Russo over the phone May 6, and stories of how and why the split transpired are different on both ends. Excerpts of what Arezzi said that Russo disagreed with will be reprinted, with Russo offering his side of the story afterward. Russo began broadcasting a weekly radio show on WGGB in Babylon, NY from 6-8 p.m. on May 8. This interview was written in chronological order, with this installment focusing on the time directly before the Arezzi-Russo split and the WWF's steroid symposium in New York. The final part of the interview will appear in next week's issue, followed by a response from Arezzi the week after.

• In March, with the scandals about to break, Vince was having a more and more difficult time getting through to (WWF spokesman Steve) Planamenta. Finally, he got through after Issue Six, which had McMahon's name on a tombstone on the cover. Vince wanted an interview with Chief Jay Strongbow, who was his favorite wrestler. Steve said, "Why should I do anything with you guys? One week you have us on a tombstone, and the next week you want us to give you Chief Jay Strongbow?" ... Vince started telling Steve that it was John Arezzi saying those things, not Pro Wrestling Spotlight. "I'm half of this. I don't agree with what the other newsletter guys said," Vince said. "I'm not a sheet writer. I'm an entertainment critic. I think we've gone too overboard with some of our coverage." Planamenta said he would think about Vince's request and get back to him. ** After not hearing from Steve, Russo called again to try to get the interview. ... That week, Vince wrote a scathing editorial on Planamenta on why he couldn't interview Strongbow. I read it and said this was the best thing he had ever written, because this one really came from the heart. But he pulls it from the newsletter. He has second thoughts and doesn't run it. He said you have to give the guy a second chance. He revamped it to run later, but it appeared nothing like it was initially.

VR: The first time I tried to get through to Planamenta, I got him. I never revamped (the editorial) to run later. I held on to the editorial. What happened was I was very upset with (Planamenta) lumping me with (newsletter writers). I didn't appreciate the fact he didn't treat me like an individual and give me a shot, and I guess I didn't really understand where he was coming from. So that made me very upset, and I wrote a very negative editorial. I got it out of my system, thought about it and said to myself, "There's got to be a reason for this. He will not talk to me for a reason. Running this editorial without knowing all the facts is incorrect." Therefore, I took the editorial back and never printed it. But there was never a revamped edition of that.

• March 15 was an explosive show, because it was the weekend of the Donahue deal. I had a real big problem with Vince and the typesetters of the newsletter, because I did a "Mat Memory" on Planamenta, and it mysteriously disappeared. I couldn't get any straight answers. I didn't want to get censored in own newsletter, which was beginning to happen.

VR: I'll vouch for (the typesetters) there. They lost it. So I called him and said, "You need to write it again. They lost it. I don't know what to tell you." We didn't have much time, so I suggested he call (the typesetter) and give her (the Mat Memory) over the phone, which is what took place. Straight answers? It was lost, and I told him

AM: Why did he say he was getting censored in his own newsletter?

VR: We have a typesetter who is an older woman. Sometimes, believe it or not, even though we're paying them, they read the newsletter from an outsider's point of view. If they felt we went a little too far or overboard with something, they would tell us. A lot of times it made sense to me, because I wrote some things out of anger. One thing they had a problem with John's column is something about his shaking Planamenta's hand and remembering Planamenta had those "sweaty little palms." They said, "John, we really don't think you should say this, etc." This was one-on-one on the phone. I wasn't even there. At that time, I don't know who agreed with what, but they agreed on that phone call to take that line out. I didn't even have anything to do with it. But to this day, they still do that with me.

• I got wind of a steroid symposium that was supposed to take place at the Plaza hotel March 24. I was informed of it the Sunday before it was

scheduled to take place, and I said I'd like to go. I was told by a friend of mine that I was not going to be let in if I showed up. I decided to go anyhow. The day before the symposium, I talked to Vince about it. I said I was going to crash it, and that's how we left it. I got a call from Vince in the afternoon, and he said he just got off the phone with Steve. They had a long conversation, and Steve decided to send us a video tape of the symposium to work with us halfway.

VR: Again, I'm trying to be a professional. This was a steroid symposium given by the WWF, who critics were now hanging, crucifying, whatever you want to call it. But these guys are giving a major symposium. This should be something that we need to cover. I don't want to hear that it's a lie, that it's PR, that it's this or that. That's not for me to decide. I call Planamenta and I go through the same thing I had gone through a month ago. I begged, pleaded ... "Steve, this is an important story. I want to cover it for Pro Wrestling Spotlight. I'm not Arezzi. I'm not (Dave) Meltzer. Can you at least give me a shot?" He still wouldn't let me go to the symposium -- I wanted to go -- but he said, "OK. You want a shot? We'll start here. I'll send you a video tape of the symposium, and you can write your story from that." And I said that was fine. I just wanted the story. I hung up.

AM: It seems to me that you weren't trying to produce an insider's newsletter.

VR: I wasn't. You're absolutely right.

AM: I guess, in a way, you should be compared more to Bill Apter than Dave Meltzer.

VR: You know who I should be compared to? That I talk to a lot now? Carmine Despirto, editor of Wrestling Eye. But can I explain to you something about this? This is something that John can't figure out. What is so key here, something he never brings up, is that during this whole mess, I am now going to Johnny Rodz's school of wrestling. I am now going three times a week, becoming very close with the wrestlers and almost best friends with Johnny Rodz. I would sit down and talk to this man about the wrestling business for hours. The conversations I had with him, to this day, I treasure. I really formed a relationship with this man. We never spoke about the (radio) show or anything like that. I was just going down there to become a professional wrestling manager. What happened was that the more this happened to me and the more inside I got, the more of a respect I started to get for the business. The more I didn't want to tell the serious wrestling fan everything, because now I'm on the inside of the business. I drew a great likeness to the managers, the wrestlers and Johnny Rodz, and it was becoming something very special. A respect began building up in me. A respect for the business and what these individuals are trying to do. The longer this went on, the more I drifted away from John. John can't understand that, because he's never gone through this. I will never stop going to the wrestling school, because it gives me an understanding of the business, a love for the business and a respect for the business. As this went on, I grew farther and farther away from what he wanted to do.

AM: In defense of John for a minute, John was part of the wrestling business back in the 1970s in various forms ...

VR: People can disagree with me and rip me, but as far as I'm concerned now, after the experience I got from Rodz, if you have never been inside a wrestling ring and a part of the wrestling business -- not a photographer, not a reporter, not a sheet writer -- until you are in that wrestling ring and business, I personally don't think you have the right to call yourself an authority on the business. That's one thing I feel stronger and stronger about each week.

AM: Let me compare wrestling writers to football writers, in a sense. Most reporters who cover the NFL have never played football, at least on a collegiate level. Yet they have respect from the public when it comes to covering football...

VR: Yeah, but you see, this is a different case, because we're wrestling. We have the whole secrecy of the business. It's a totally different atmosphere. I've learned this. Unless you are there or a part of it, you cannot fully understand it. It's not like covering football, baseball or hockey, because the wrestling business is not that way. The business still has some of the secrecy about it, some of the mystique, and it is still a special kind of business. If you're not involved with it, you're missing a very important element. That's my opinion. That's one thing that I've learned through all this. I was starting to get this special respect for it that I didn't have. The more I did and the more I was around these guys and in the ring with them, the stronger and stronger it got with me. I think this is where the feelings in covering the business really started to diverse between John and myself.

AM: John was upset that you had entered Johnny Rodz's wrestling school. You said that was something you did on your personal time, something that had nothing to do with the business. Yet, in a sense, it turned out, and I know not intentionally, affecting the newsletter.

VR: Well, no. I wouldn't say it ended up affecting the newsletter. Remember that conversation I had with Planamenta after Issue 6, where I said I was an entertainment critic? I continued to be that. I didn't change my writing for the newsletter. John always covered the hard news. I never covered the hard news. I didn't want to. I can tell you honestly, yes, it did affect our relationship, but no, it didn't affect the way I wrote in the newsletter, because I never uncovered the business in the newsletter to begin with. I just criticized shows, I criticized television, I did my "Where Are They Now" interviews and it never changed my style of writing in the newsletter. But it did change our relationship.

• *As all this is going on, the wheels are starting to turn at Titan Sports, because they saw that we were not a team, that I'm the bad guy and Vince tries to portray the WWF as truth, justice and the American way. I guess they saw it and Vince gets a second call from Planamenta inviting him to the symposium.*

VR: Truth, justice and the American way? No. We have a Pro Wrestling Spotlight. We have people subscribing. This is a major story. I am not going to not cover this because Dave Meltzer and John Arezzi think this is some kind of a PR stunt and all bullshit. That's not for me to decide. They are putting on a steroid symposium, and I was going to cover this story just stating the facts. I would agree with all that about their wheels turning. I not only got a call inviting me to the symposium, but Steve stated that Vince would love for me to come. Quote, unquote. As far as I'm concerned, we are now being able to go and cover the story. That was what I wanted.

• *They said Vince McMahon himself had invited him. But he said they would let him go if he came alone. I felt I should go and cover it. He got a little upset, and maybe I acted like a kid, too. We called in a mediator -- Dave Meltzer. He said this was a situation where the WWF was going to try to divide and conquer us. I was in no mood to fight, so I decided I wouldn't go, but at least we would get the story through Vince.*

VR: We didn't call in a mediator. He called me with Dave Meltzer on the phone. I didn't call him. John used the words divide and conquer. He used them quite a few times. I had Meltzer and John Arezzi on the phone at the same time, going back and forth, back and forth. I made it clear to both of them that their objectivity was in the toilet, and that neither one of them could cover this story non-biased any longer. They had lost their objectivity a long, long time ago and that I was not going to fall into that trap. I made it clear to the both of them that as far as they're concerned, anything the WWF said or does is a lie.

AM: Where do you feel the objectivity went away from Dave and John?

VR: The last straw for me was that Meltzer told me himself on the phone that he was invited to the steroid symposium. Here you have a major story by the No 1 wrestling federation in the world, and you have the editor of the *New York Times* of professional wrestling not only being invited to the symposium but also being offered transportation to the symposium. Yet, he refused to go. The reason he refused to go, he told me was, is because he felt this was just something for the World Wrestling Federation to hold over his head. For them to say, "Well, we invited you to the symposium, and we flew

you in." When he said that to me, you guys shouldn't even be covering this story any more and I refuse to fall in the same trap. I am a journalist. This is a major story, and I'm going to cover it. I am not going to decide if it is a publicity stunt or not. At this point, John says to me, I'm going in, I'm sneaking in, I'm going to make a fuss to get in," and I told him, "John, I am a professional. They asked me to come alone, and I said I would. If you were going to go down there and make a scene, fine. You tell me now, because if that's the case, I don't want any part of it, I'm not going." John said he was doing it, so I said I wasn't going. I hung up with them, and five minutes later he called me back and said he thought about it, it was important to get the story and I should go.

AM: Obviously, Dave has covered the story from the onset and has spoken with Vince McMahon. Vince has come out with a statement that contradicts itself later or doesn't make any sense. Do you think that played any role in his decision?

VR: The way I look at it, A steroid symposium was given with him breathing down their necks, every reporter in New York ripping them to shreds, this is a major news event. If you are the editor of the *New York Times* of professional wrestling, you go this symposium. Period. I don't care about your past history. You're the *New York Times*, everybody looks up to you, you have 5,000 subscribers, how in God's name can you not cover this symposium. I don't care what's happened with McMahon. From my perspective, that totally ruined his objectivity, because he was already pre-judging it before he even went.

• *(Editor's note: The next statements were made about the day after the symposium) Russo told me we really had these guys (the WWF) by the balls.*

VR: I never said that in my life. I should be struck dead if I had ever said that line.

• *He said they laid out the red carpet for him at the symposium.*

VR: I never said that. I heard that before. He said that in the *New York Daily News*, and I never said that.

• *He started talking about all this stuff about (Dr. Mauro) DiPasquale and other bullshit. He said he was sitting there with (WWF spokesman) Steve Planamenta, and it was really nice, having lunch with Linda and Shane McMahon (Vince McMahon's wife and son, respectively) and they were really nice people. He said Vince even came over and talked to him for half an hour.*

VR: I never said that because I didn't sit with Steve Planamenta. I didn't eat lunch with Linda and Shane McMahon. They came over and introduced themselves to me. I didn't even eat, to be honest with you. Vince came up to me with Steve Planamenta, and he introduced me to Vince. I had a conversation with them for about five minutes, and maybe about 20 minutes or so later, I talked with Vince McMahon one-on-one for about five minutes.

• *I asked what they discussed. He said Vince told him that we don't realize how much fun a wrestling radio show can be. I asked what does that mean, and he said, "John, this is our chance. We need the WWF to make any money. We've been spinning our wheels for four months, not making any money."*

VR: You have to understand something. If we are the Pro Wrestling Spotlight, we are not going to be successful without talking to the WWF. I said that from day one. We have a radio show in New York City on a 50,000-watt station. What kind of credibility do we have if the WWF won't even talk to us? I always felt that.

AM: You think they need to talk to you for you to have credibility?

VR: I think we need to talk to them. I mean, they're covering professional wrestling. It's like covering the New York Mets and not being allowed in the locker room. Everybody calling into our show, 90 percent of the people, wanted to know information about the WWF. They had all WWF questions. This is why all along I tried to build a relationship with (Planamenta), because I felt it was not fair to the wrestling fans to not have any communication with the WWF when 90 percent of their questions concerned them.

AM: From my personal standpoint, my relations with the WWF were cut off for about eight months back in 1991 and it didn't make a single bit of difference in my coverage, because I knew what was going on anyway. Dave Meltzer can vouch for the same thing. What did you hope to get out of the communication process?

VR: Just giving the fans what I thought they wanted.

AM: Which was?

VR: Instead of every week talking to Steve Beverly and Dave Meltzer and Wade Keller, perhaps talking to Ric Flair, Randy Savage or any

wrestler a fan wants to talk to. That's what. As a wrestling fan, that's what I would want.

AM: I have to assume that would be an in-character conversation, like Randy Savage the wrestler, not **Randy Poffo** the human being.

VR: Right. I would believe so, because as top dog and the number one federation and the history of what they've done and the money they've made, if (the WWF) granted us an interview with one of their wrestlers, than I personally would feel it is their prerogative to set the guidelines or the guy is not coming on the show. But I personally feel they would have had that right.

AM: That's so different than what John does.

VR: It's very different. I made a mistake. I am not interested in John Arezzi fans. Those are not the people I want to reach or write for. I didn't know that at the beginning. I didn't know at the beginning exactly what kind of show John Arezzi had. But from my point of view, the show got worse and worse and dirtier and dirtier week after week after week. It got to the point that I could not take it anymore. That's when we get into what I'm doing now. The people who listen to John Arezzi for the hard-core aspects of wrestling will not be listening to my show. I consider myself a casual fan. If you want to call me a mark, go ahead. I could care less. I am in the majority of the WWF fans. Out of a wrestling radio show, this is what

I would want. We did maybe 10 shows. Out of two of those 10 shows, John had to go on the air and have trivia night because he couldn't get any guests. I was pissed off because it cost me more than \$2,000 to pay for trivia night because John couldn't get any guests. As a wrestling fan, I don't want to have trivia night. I want to talk to **Sting**, the Steiners, **Jimmy Hart** as a wrestling fan. Therefore, I felt it was always essential to have a relationship with both WCW and the WWF.

One question I wanted to ask you. Three weeks ago, I heard a little bit of John's show. I don't listen to it anymore, because I don't want to have anything to do with it. He had **Paul E. Dangerously** on, who is a friend of his. The whole show, for what I listened to, Paul E. was in character, talking about The Dangerous Alliance, Sting, etc. Why is that all right with John Arezzi? That's not the kind of show he wants. The reason that's all right with John Arezzi is because he cannot get WCW or WWF guests on his own, therefore he makes up the excuse that he doesn't want these guys on the show because he doesn't want them on in character. Meanwhile, it's OK for Paul E. and **Cactus Jack** to come on in character? Who's kidding who? He doesn't have those people on his show because he can't get them. I want these people on my show. That's why I always felt a relationship with both federations is essential if you're going to have a wrestling show. Planamanta and I yelled and screamed at each other, but I always tried to do it, because it was essential.

Next week: I only have 35 minutes to reach the Federal Express box, so I will be brief. Anyone who sent me pictures to scan will have them returned within two weeks. Also, Three Count changed its address a month ago (please note). Next week will feature the conclusion of the Vince Russo interview, the return of John Muse's Japan column, Paul Hamlin and Carlos Rey columns and the return of the Florida independent section. See ya' in a week.

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